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LETTER DATED 22 MARCH 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to convey the attached communication, dated 22 March 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

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Annex

Letter dated 22 March 1996 from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with United Nations Security Council resolution 1031 (1995), I attach the fourth report on the operations of the Implementation Force (IFOR). I would appreciate your making this report available to the United Nations Security Council.

On 19 March (D+90), we passed another deadline in the implementation of annex 1-A to the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In general, I am satisfied with the cooperation and compliance of the parties in implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. That said, there are some areas of serious concern, such as the continued presence of foreign forces and detention of prisoners of war in violation of the Peace Agreement, and the violence associated with the transfer of Sarajevo suburbs to Federation control. There is no doubt that there will be further challenges to meet as we move towards the next major deadline at D+120.

IFOR is now working with the parties towards the D+120 requirement to withdraw all heavy weapons and forces to designated areas and to demobilize those which cannot be accommodated there. IFOR is also working to extend freedom of movement for the civilian population and to consolidate the secure environment within which the overall implementation of the Peace Agreement can proceed.

IFOR has accomplished much in the last 90 days. In future, I anticipate that the focus of attention will shift increasingly from the military to the civil aspects of peace implementation. IFOR will continue to assist the High Representative and the civil agencies in whatever ways it can, consistent with its primary mission. We recognize that IFOR cannot succeed on its own. Peace will only endure in Bosnia and Herzegovina if both the military and the civil aspects of implementation succeed in concert.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Appendix

Fourth report to the United Nations Security Council on IFOR operations

The present report covers the period between the last report (S/1996/131, annex), dated 26 February 1996, and 22 March 1996.

Deployment of the Implementation Force (IFOR)

1. The deployment of the NATO element of the multinational implementation force (IFOR) is complete. IFOR comprises approximately 49,000 personnel from all the NATO countries and 6,500 from non-NATO contributors. It will be further strengthened as forces from other non-NATO contributors transfer under IFOR control. IFOR is fully capable of carrying out its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement. This includes monitoring of compliance by the parties with their obligations under annex 1-A, including respect for the new zone of separation (established along the inter-entity boundary line at D+90 (19 March). In addition, IFOR is helping to ensure overall freedom of movement, providing a secure environment for the work of the various organizations involved in implementing the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement, and assisting those organizations, on a case-by-base basis, from available resources without detriment to IFOR's primary mission.

2. IFOR air assets continue to provide a robust capability to secure the air space, defend and support IFOR ground forces and monitor compliance. They also provide a capability for close air support to the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES). The maritime assets currently deployed both in support of IFOR and for Operation Sharp Guard continue to provide surveillance, a presence to seaward of the coast and, embarked, the theatre reserve.

3. Force contributions from 12 non-Nato countries are now operational in theatre and it is expected that troops from two additional non-NATO countries will be in theatre and operational next month. Offers from other non-NATO countries are still pending. It is expected that a total of around 10,000 troops will be provided by non-NATO contributors to IFOR.

Risk assessment

4. Rogue or extremist elements and the continued risk posed by foreign forces remain of concern to IFOR. Occasional sniping and shooting incidents, although declining, have also continued although these are assessed as stemming mainly from disaffected elements of the parties. IFOR's robust capabilities and rules of engagement enable it to defend itself effectively and to provide protection for others involved in implementing the Peace Agreement.

5. The very large number of mines that are scattered throughout Bosnia remain the most significant danger to IFOR personnel and others. Incidents continue to cause casualties to IFOR and local people and, notwithstanding the efforts of the parties to mark and clear the minefields, under IFOR supervision,

the problem remains very great. The inaccuracy of the information on known minefields, the quantity of mines, poor weather until now and the lack of proper mine marking and clearing equipment have significantly impaired the clearance of mines by the parties. The threat posed by mines to the civilian population is likely to increase as improving weather leads to more movement of the population.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

6. At a meeting with Contact Group countries at Geneva on 17 and 18 March, all parties reaffirmed their commitment to the terms of the Peace Agreement. Progress on compliance with annex 1-A to the Peace Agreement has been generally evident across the board and the parties are continuing to work towards meeting their responsibilities. In particular:

- The cease-fire continues to hold and the parties remain generally in compliance with the cessation of hostilities.

- All parties have been generally in compliance with the requirements in the zones of separation (ZOS) and areas of transfer, including the new ZOS established along the inter-entity boundary line at D+90 (19 March). Verification of compliance with the new ZOS continues, particularly as the removal of some forces from the new ZOS within Sarajevo occurred only as the deadline passed following a demonstration of IFOR resolve. Minor violations of the ZOS by all parties have continued to occur. These generally involve small groups of soldiers patrolling and sometimes manning positions within the ZOS. When challenged by IFOR they have complied and left the area.

- IFOR has required air defence systems to be secured in designated sites by D+90. While there has been major movement to achieve this, it is assessed that full compliance has yet to be achieved.

- The Peace Agreement requires the withdrawal of all foreign forces, whether advisers, trainers, volunteers or freedom fighters. Full compliance has not been achieved and the continued presence of foreign forces in contravention of the Peace Agreement is a continuing cause for serious concern.

- All parties are still holding prisoners of war in violation of the Peace Agreement. Following the negotiations at Geneva, it is imperative that the final release of prisoners by all parties be now achieved.

- Restrictions on the freedom of movement for civilians, refugees and displaced persons continue to cause concern. This has been particulary so along the inter-entity boundary line, where undeclared control points have been established by the parties. Elsewhere, restrictions are frequently caused more by fear than by physical obstruction. IFOR has warned all parties that only police functions supervised by the International Police Task Force will be permitted

and that IFOR will require unauthorized check-points along the inter-ethnic boundary line to be dismantled.

- In some areas, especially within Sarajevo, the introduction and ethnic balance of some police forces have been raising tension and risking confrontation.

- Although the phased transition of the Sarajevo suburbs to Federation control, due by D+90, has been achieved on time, the looting, arson and beatings which accompanied it have been a cause for considerable concern and could have serious repercussions in other areas. IFOR has worked closely with the High Representative, the Task Force, the Federation police and local leaders in trying to maintain control and calm within these areas. This has included the heavy patrolling of affected areas and the protection of fire-fighters and essential installations.

7. IFOR will continue to execute its mission in an evenhanded manner. Following the Rome Summit on 17 and 18 February, contact has been restored with all parties and the Joint Military Commission and its supporting structure of military commissions are now operating effectively. Meetings between the parties and IFOR Commanders continue to focus on the military aspects of compliance and to provide a forum within which to address such current issues as Sarajevo and freedom of movement.

Cooperation with the High Representative and international organizations

8. Recognizing that the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement are crucial to its success, IFOR is assisting the High Representative and the international organizations involved in implementing the civil aspects of the Peace Agreement as far as its principal tasks, as defined in the Peace Agreement, and available resources allow. The IFOR civil/military cooperation process involves close liaison and cooperation with international organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). IFOR is already engaged in supporting a number of reconstruction projects, mainly in areas of importance for the conduct of its mission. It is also in close contact with the staff of the High Representative and OSCE representatives about how best it can provide support to the elections required by the Peace Agreement. General support to all civil agencies includes the exchange of information and security advice and, in emergency, the provision of medical and repair facilities, fuel, accommodation and food, based on retrospective repayment arrangements.

9. Specific support is being provided, where possible, to the High Representative and his staff, including assistance with transportation, logistics, communications, security and administration. Media communications facilities have also been offered to the High Representative to enhance his ability to communicate with the population. IFOR is represented on and helping to extend the High Representative's Joint Civil Commission structure throughout the country.

10. IFOR continues to support, within the limits of its assigned principal tasks and available resources, the efforts of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to bring persons indicted by the Tribunal to justice. A recent example is the transport and escort protection given to the Tribunal team investigating a mass grave site in the Prijedor Obstina area. IFOR is also undertaking air reconnaissance and area ground surveillance of suspected mass grave sites and will report any tampering which it detects to the Tribunal.

11. IFOR is supporting the International Police Task Force by providing quick reaction forces and other forms of assistance. As mentioned in the last report, it is essential, in the interest of ensuring stability, for the Task Force to reach full strength as soon as possible.